

CINCINNATI FIRE DEPARTMENT
FAO DARYL GORDON LINE OF DUTY DEATH
PRELIMINARY REPORT



August 9, 2015

The following report is a product of the Dahlgren Investigative Work Group. The work group and the Dahlgren Investigative Committee were formed to ensure that all factors leading to the death of Fire Apparatus Operator (FAO) Daryl Gordon would be fully investigated so that appropriate actions may be taken to lessen the chance of a similar occurrence. The information contained in this report has been compiled using data obtained from members' SCBA Integrated Control Modules (ICM), Motorola radio transmission data, and interviews conducted in conjunction with the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), as well as the investigative efforts of work group members. This preliminary report contains the facts surrounding the LODD of FAO Gordon, and primarily focuses on the event timeline of the multiple alarm fire at 6020 Dahlgren Street on March 26, 2015.

Using the information formulated by the work group, the Dahlgren Investigative Committee will generate a second more comprehensive report. This second report will examine issues such as standard operating procedures, training and experience levels of personnel, equipment, technology and many other factors that may be relevant to the death of FAO Daryl Gordon as well as injuries sustained by the other fire fighters. Finally, this second report will also address factors that may prevent future fire fighter injuries and fatalities.

The Dahlgren Investigative Work Group

- **AC** **Ed Dadosky**
- **DC** **Marc Monahan**
- **DC** **Greg Potter**
- **DC** **Sherman Smith**
- **DC** **Anson Turley**
- **Capt** **Curt Goodman**
- **Lt** **Bill Lustenberger**

INCIDENT SUMMARY:

REPORT OF FIRE	Automatic fire alarm-smoke detector activation followed by multiple telephone calls
DEATHS/INJURIES	1 firefighter fatality- 3 firefighter injuries 3 civilians transported to hospital
INITIAL SIZE UP	“Nothing Showing” upon the arrival of the first fire companies
BUILDING DETAILS	5 story brick and concrete block, built in 1962. Due to the grading around the building, ground level access is available on the A Side for the first floor, both C Side apartments on the second floor, and both stairwells (B-C and C-D Corners) on the landing between the first and second floor. Both stairwells provide access to all floors.
OCCUPANCY	Multi-family apartment building (38 Units) Floor 1 has six units, offices, and storage space. Floors 2-5 have eight units and a laundry room.
ELEVATOR	Manufacturer: Canton Elevator Company Date: 3/29/1993 Installed: 3/1996 Elevator Shaft Dimensions: 76.5” (A-C) X 67” (B-D) Elevator Car Dimensions: Exterior- 55.5” (A-C) X 51.25 (B-D) Interior- 52.5” (A-C) X 48” (B-D)
RESCUES	A total of 21 civilians were rescued from this building.
FALL	The distance from the floor level of 5 th floor to the top of the elevator was 22’ and 9.5”. The top of the elevator car was 3’ and 1” below the 3 rd floor level. The elevator car floor was 1’ and 3.5” below 2 nd floor level. Distance between rear (C) of elevator shaft and the back wall (C) side of the elevator car was 11.75” (Void)
FIRE CAUSE AND ORIGIN	Accidental-Cooking materials left unattended on the stove. This fire originated in Apartment 27.

CRITICAL BENCHMARKS

- 05:37:39 E-49 on-scene reporting nothing showing in a 6-Story MD
- 05:41:41 D-4 reports a “working fire”
- 05:51:35 Command (D-4) requests E-49 FAO to start the water in E-49’s line.
- 05:51:45 HR-9 reports that the fire has extended into the 2nd floor hallway
- 05:52:56 Command (D-4) requests E-46 & E-18 to lay a line to the 2nd floor.
- 05:54:25 HR-9 reports that E-49’s line needs to be extended an additional 50-60’
- 06:00:16 HR-9 reports that water is being put on the fire.
- 06:01:00 SO-2 reports E-49 OIC is burned and is heading to building “A” side.
- 06:02:14 Command (D-4) reports that fire has been “knocked down ”but still has heavy smoke conditions on all floors.
- **06:04 HR-14 (FAO Gordon) arrives on the scene.**
- 06:09 HR-14 OIC, FF1, FF2 go on air in the “B” stairs between 4th & 5th floors.
- 06:09:32 Search & Rescue (D-3) reports HR-14 heading to Apt 557
- 06:10 FAO Gordon goes on air in the “B” stairs between 4th & 5th floors.
- **06:10 The members of HR14 search apts. 57, 51, & 52, and then find the 5th floor elevator door can be easily opened without needing to force it. FAO Gordon is not with the members when they find the door. HR-14 marks the outside of the elevator door, "Do Not Enter Open Shaft" [see Figure 9]**
- **06:12 FAO Gordon falls down the elevator shaft.**
- 06:15:36 HR-14 OIC reports “All Clear” on the 5th floor.
- 06:22:18 HR-14 OIC broadcasts “Mayday” over the radio.
- 06:36:17 Extrication (SOC) reports that FAO Gordon has been extricated.

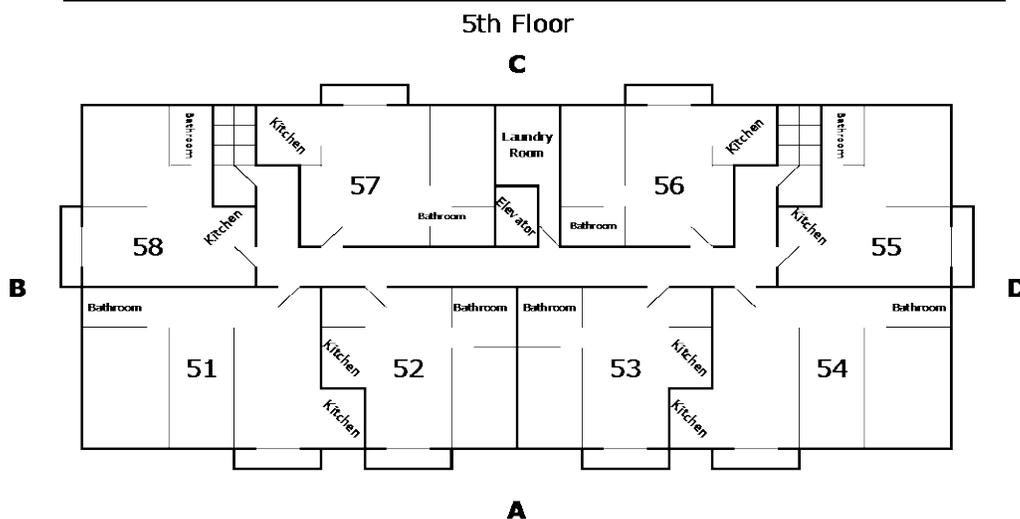
INCIDENT DESCRIPTION [PRE] HR-14 ARRIVAL ON THE SCENE



At 0531 hours on Thursday March 26, 2015 Engine 49, Ladder 31, and District 4 were dispatched to 6020 Dahlgren Ave. for a smoke detector activation. At 0534 hours the Cincinnati Emergency Communications Center (Dispatch) upgraded the incident to a one alarm due to receiving multiple calls reporting smoke in the building. The balance of the first alarm complement was dispatched and the assigned fire ground channel was changed from D8 to D2. Engine 49 arrived at 0538 hours and reported a six story multi-dwelling with no fire showing. *[Building location on a hillside led to the initial size up error reporting 6 stories versus the actual 5 stories. This had no bearing on the fatality for this incident.]* District 4 arrived on the scene at 0540 hours and confirmed a working fire and assumed Dahlgren Command. At 0541 hours Dahlgren Command requested an additional Engine and Truck Company from Dispatch. Due to heavy fire conditions and the initial attack line becoming wedged in the D-C stairwell preventing it from reaching the fire, a second alarm was requested at 0547 hours, at which time Heavy Rescue 14 (FAO Gordon) responded. In an attempt to get an attack line in place and operating, Dahlgren Command assigned Safety Engine 46 and RAT 23 to advance an additional attack line from Engine 49 through the A Side of the building to the apartment on fire. RAT operations were reassigned to Ladder 19 when the third alarm was requested at 0555 hours. Dahlgren Command reported the fire under control at 0602 hours; however numerous occupants still required assistance to exit the building while heavy smoke conditions persisted throughout the building including moderate to heavy on the 5th floor.

HR-14 arrived on the scene at 0604 hours and received an assignment from Dahlgren Command to search the fifth floor.

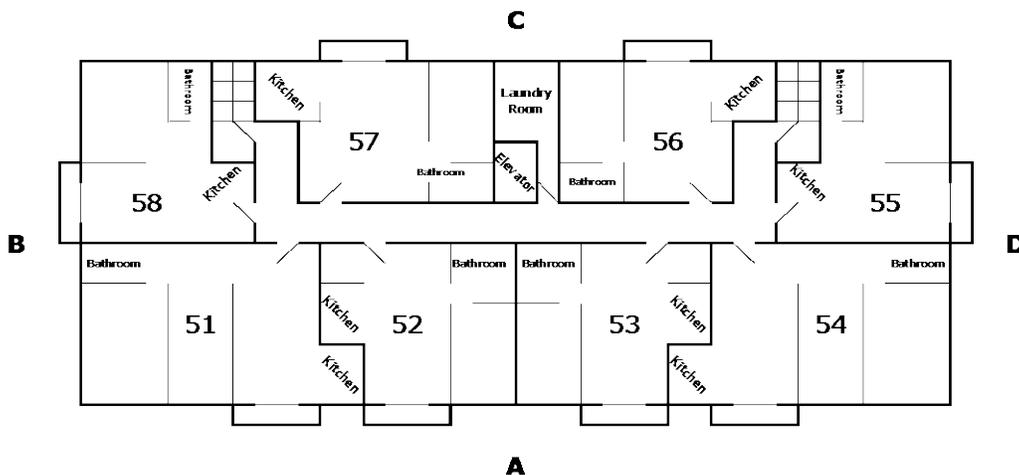
INCIDENT TIMELINE [POST] HR-14 ARRIVAL ON THE SCENE



- **06:04:** HR-14 arrived on scene and all four members (including FAO Gordon) proceeded to the A side of the structure where HR-14 OIC reported to Command, and was ordered to search the fifth floor.
- **06:08:** All four members of HR-14 entered the building on the first floor through the A side entrance. According to ICM data, HR14 OIC, FF#1, and FF#2 turned on their SCBA cylinders and proceeded to the B-C Stairwell to ascend to the fifth floor. FAO Gordon did not turn on his SCBA cylinder at this time.
- **06:09:** HR-14 reaches the 4th/5th stairwell landing in the B-C stairwell. While HR-14 was ascending the stairwell, Dispatch informed Dahlgren Command of a report of victims trapped in apartment 557 (later confirmed to be apartment 57).
- **06:09:35:** D-3 (Search and Rescue Operations) radioed to Dahlgren Command that HR-14 was on the way to apartment 557. At this time all four members of HR-14 were reportedly on the 4th/5th stairwell landing with D-3 immediately behind them.
- **06:10:15:** D-3 reported two victims coming out, “we’ve got one baby and one adult.” HR-14 OIC, FF#1, and FF#2 reported that as they were donning their SCBA face pieces these victims passed them on the stairs escorted by L-18 FF#1, L-23 OIC, and L-23 FF#1. The order of HR-14 members on the 4th/5th stairwell landing at this time was OIC, FF#2, FF#1, and then FAO Gordon.
- **06:10:** While on the 4th/5th stairwell landing and according to ICM data, HR-14 FAO Gordon turned on his SCBA cylinder, donned his face piece, and went on air. The other members of HR-14 had already entered the fifth floor slightly ahead of FAO Gordon to search for victims. Smoke conditions were reported as moderate with visibility limited to 4-5 feet. HR-14 OIC and FF#2 entered apt. 57; HR-14 FF #1 entered apt. 51; and HR-14 FAO Gordon’s location was unknown at this time.

INCIDENT TIMELINE (CONTINUED)

5th Floor

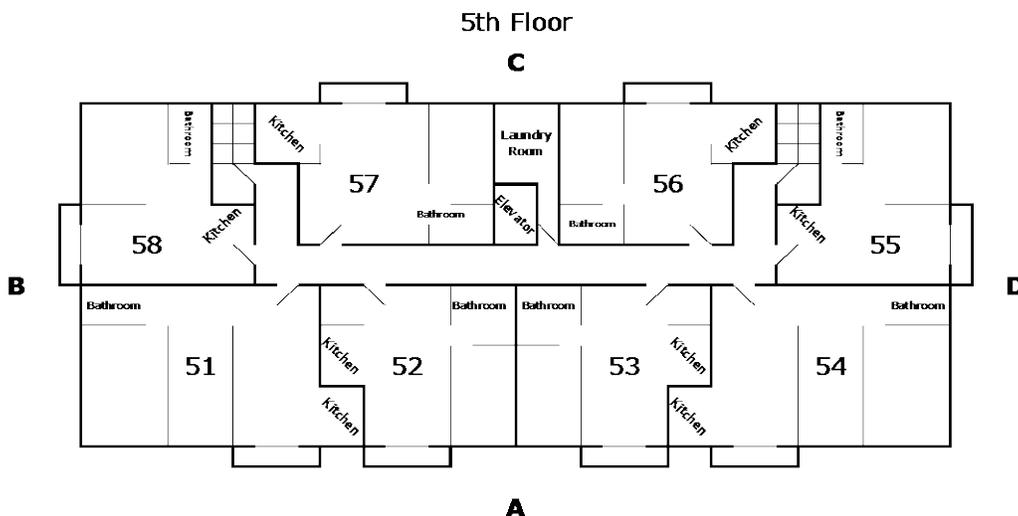


- **06:11:** HR-14 OIC, FF#1, and FF#2 met at the door of apt. 52 where HR-14 OIC and FF#1 enter and search apt. 52. HR-14 FF#2 moved down the hallway and found the elevator door. The elevator door could be easily opened without needing to be forced. HR-14 OIC and FF#1 arrived at FF#2's location where they discussed how to mark the free-swinging elevator door which led to an open elevator shaft. FAO Gordon was not present when this discussion took place.
- **06:11-06:12:** While D-3 was on the fifth floor he encountered HR-14 OIC, FF#1, and FF#2 at the elevator door. HR-14 showed D-3 the open elevator shaft. HR-14 and D-3 looked into the shaft again at this time and saw nothing. HR-14 FF#2 marked the door with a black permanent marker, **"Do Not Enter Open Shaft"** [Figure 9]. D-3 moved toward the B-C stairwell while HR-14 OIC, FF#1, and FF#2 searched the laundry room and continued toward the D side of the building.
- **06:11-06:12:** L-32 OIC, FAO, and FF#1 arrive on the fifth floor and proceed to apt. 58 to rescue two victims from the balcony.
- **06:12:** At this time D-3 left the fifth floor. L-32 FF#1 escorted two occupants out of apt. 58 to the B-C stairwell while L-32 OIC and FAO continued down the hallway and kept searching. While on the 4th/5th floor stairwell landing, L-32 FF#1 saw FAO Gordon above him at the fifth floor door.
 - FAO Gordon asked him "Are you HR-14?"
 - L-32 FF#1 responded "No, I'm with Ladder 32. Who are you?"
 - FAO Gordon replied "I'm Daryl Gordon".

After this verbal exchange, FAO Gordon turned around and headed back to the fifth floor hallway as L-32 FF#1 continued down the stairs with the two occupants from apt. 58.

Note: This is the last reported contact with FAO Gordon prior to him falling into the elevator shaft

INCIDENT TIMELINE (CONTINUED)



- 06:13: According to the ICM data, FAO Gordon's PASS device motion alarm activated at this time
- 06:13:36: HR-14 OIC, FF#1, and FF#2 met members of E-8 near apt. 55 and begin to discuss whether it is still necessary to force locked doors because the fire is under control.
- 06:14:16: L-32 OIC and FAO join the discussion with HR-14 and E-8 members. E-8 OIC requests verification from Command reference forcing doors. L-32 OIC and FAO force entry into apt. 54 and move back toward the B-C Stairwell. HR-14 OIC, FF#1, and FF#2 search apt. 54.
- 06:15:36: HR14 OIC radios an "all clear" to Dahlgren Command.
- 06:19:40: Dahlgren Command called for a PAR. At this time, HR-14 OIC conducts a PAR of HR-14 and realizes that FAO Gordon is not present. HR-14 OIC, FF#1, and FF#2 begin to search the fifth floor, starting near apt. 54 and moving through the hallway back toward the B-C stairwell.
- 06:22: HR-14 OIC, FF#1, and FF#2 were moving closer to the elevator door at which time HR-14 OIC heard an SCBA low pressure alarm bell ringing. The members of HR-14 then looked into the elevator shaft and saw a fire helmet on top of the elevator car.
- **06:22:23:** After two unsuccessful attempts to transmit a MAYDAY, HR-14 OIC activated the radio emergency button and broadcast the MAYDAY transmission.

MAYDAY OPERATIONS AND EXTRICATION EFFORTS

Extrication operations were set up and assigned to the Special Operations Chief (SOC) at 0624 hours. The exact elevator car location was determined to be at the second floor level, with FAO Gordon 'wedged' between the elevator car's exterior C side wall and the C side wall of the elevator shaft [Figure 11]. Available fire companies began to converge on both the second and third floor to begin the extrication process. As HR-9 FF#1, FF#2, and FF#3 exited the structure to obtain specialized extrication equipment from the HR-9 apparatus, members of E-23 forced entry from the second floor hallway into the elevator car and began to remove the elevator car's C side wall using a flat head axe. Members of various fire companies including HR-14 worked both on top of the elevator car and inside of the elevator car to extricate FAO Gordon. The extrication was completed in less than 14 minutes. FAO Gordon was then transported to University Hospital by several medics using Medic 19.

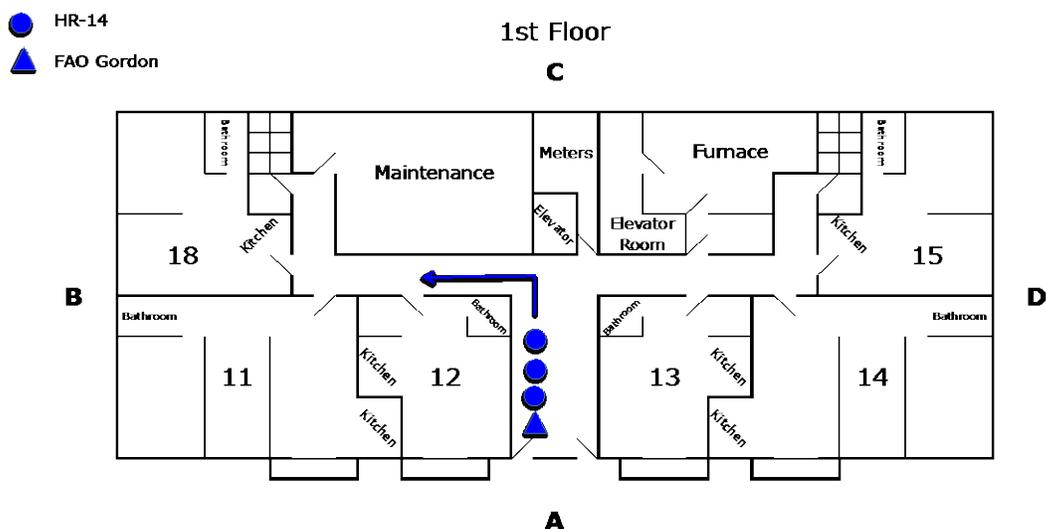
TREATMENT AND TRANSPORT

Once FAO Gordon was extricated CPR was initiated and he was transported to University Hospital by Medic 19. While enroute to University Hospital, seven Cincinnati Fire Department EMT's and Paramedics treated FAO Gordon using Southwest Ohio Pre-Hospital Care Protocol. Upon arrival at the University of Cincinnati Emergency Department treatment was transferred to the emergency department staff, where physicians pronounced FAO Gordon dead at 0708 hours.

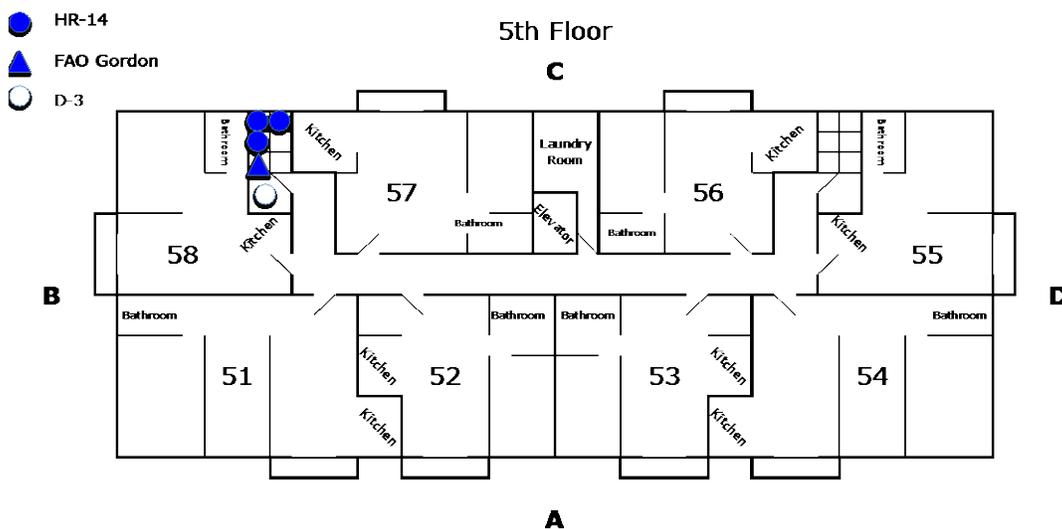
GLOSSARY

- **A, B, C, D:** The Cincinnati Fire Department has adopted the method of using letters to designate the sides of a building, thus eliminating the need to know geographic locations on an emergency scene. The address side of the building is always the A side of the building with B, C, D etc., to follow sequentially, in a clockwise manner. This method allows members to respond to orders given on a scene without having to determine compass directional reference points such as north, south, etc.
- **Cross Lay:** A pre-connected bed of 1 ¾” hose, usually 250’ in length that is mounted just behind the cab of the apparatus on an Engine Company. There are two cross lays on each Engine Company in the Cincinnati Fire Department, typically referred to as the front or rear cross lay.
- **District Chief:** The City of Cincinnati is divided into 4 fire districts. Each District is normally supervised by a District Chief and are numbered from 1 to 4. A district chief responds in an operationally equipped S.U.V. and is responsible for incident command at an emergency. The street on which an incident occurs is used to identify ‘Command’ for a respective incident, i.e. Dahlgren Command.
- **FF:** Fire Fighter. The members assigned to a company at the rank of fire fighter.
- **FAO:** Fire Apparatus Operator. The member responsible for operation of the apparatus on a given tour of duty. This person is tasked with driving the apparatus as well as operating the pumps or aerial ladder on the scene of an emergency.
- **ICM:** Integrated Control Module. This device houses the integrated PASS motion sensor and an analog and LCD display that records and provides information such as cylinder pressure, motion, thermal and low pressure alarm status. The ICM records data pertaining to battery status, cylinder pressure, and alarm status.
- **OIC:** Officer in Charge. The member responsible for daily and emergency fire company operations on a given tour of duty.
- **PAR:** Personnel Accountability Report. A process whereby the Incident Commander, or Accountability Officer, call all Company Officers by radio to confirm that all members are visually accounted for on an incident scene. The PAR is used at various times during an incident. For example, when changing tactics during an incident, at the 20-minute mark of an incident, and/or after any unexpected occurrence (building collapse, flashover, etc)
- **RAT:** Rapid Assistance Team. A company of members specially trained to rescue fire fighters in peril. A RAT Company is designated upon the dispatch of a one alarm fire.
- **Safety Engine:** The Engine Company responsible to establish accountability, to operate the SCBA Air Monitoring System, and to assist with RAT Operations. The Safety Engine is designated upon dispatch of a one alarm fire.

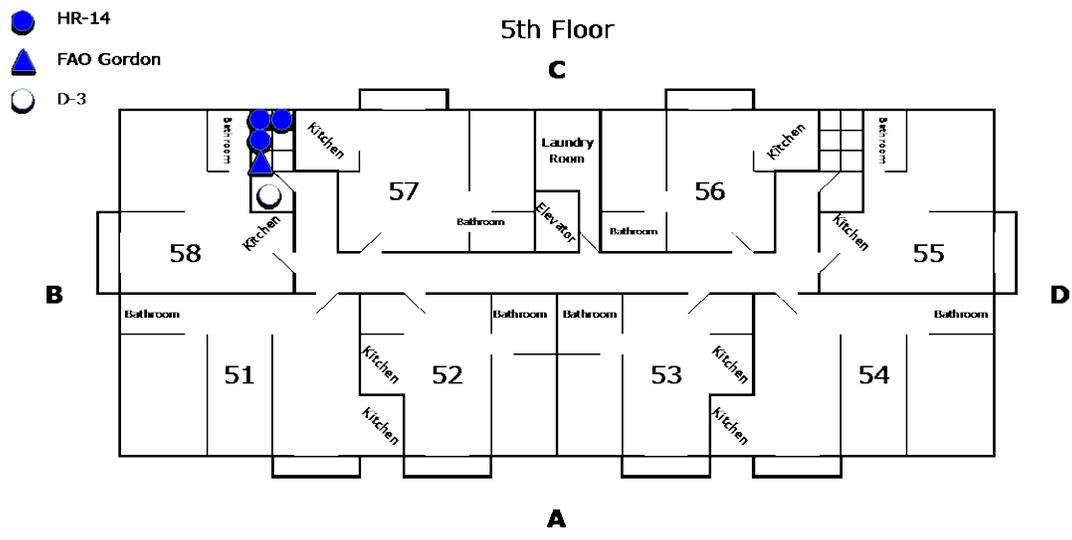
Figure 1: HR-14 Timeline



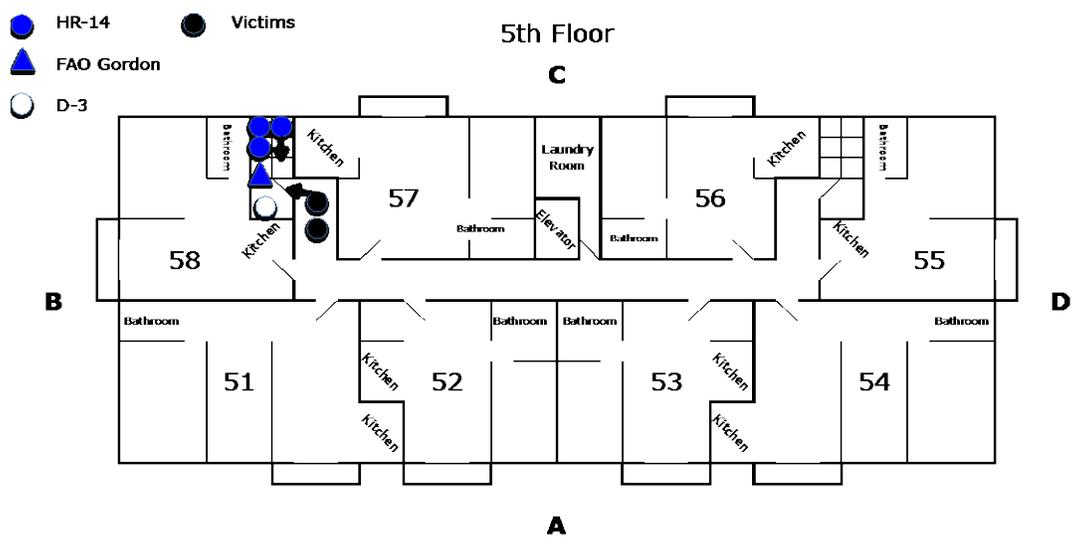
6:08: After receiving orders to search the 5th floor, members of HR-14 enter the A side of the building. According to ICM data, HR-14 OIC, FF#1 and FF#2 charge their SCBA cylinders. FAO Gordon does not charge his SCBA cylinder at this time. All members proceed to and ascend the B-C stairwell.



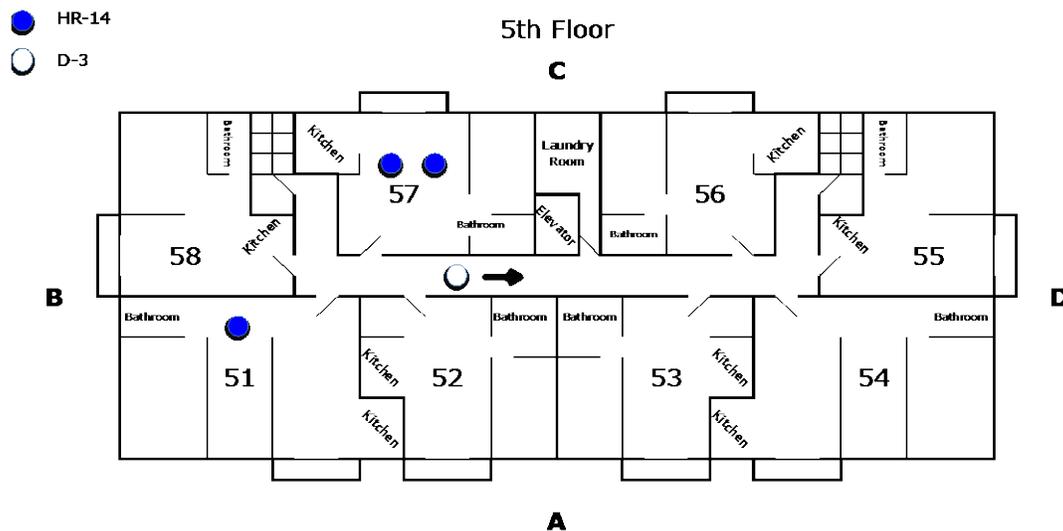
6:08 - 6:09: Members ascend B-C Stairwell to the landing between the fourth and fifth floor.



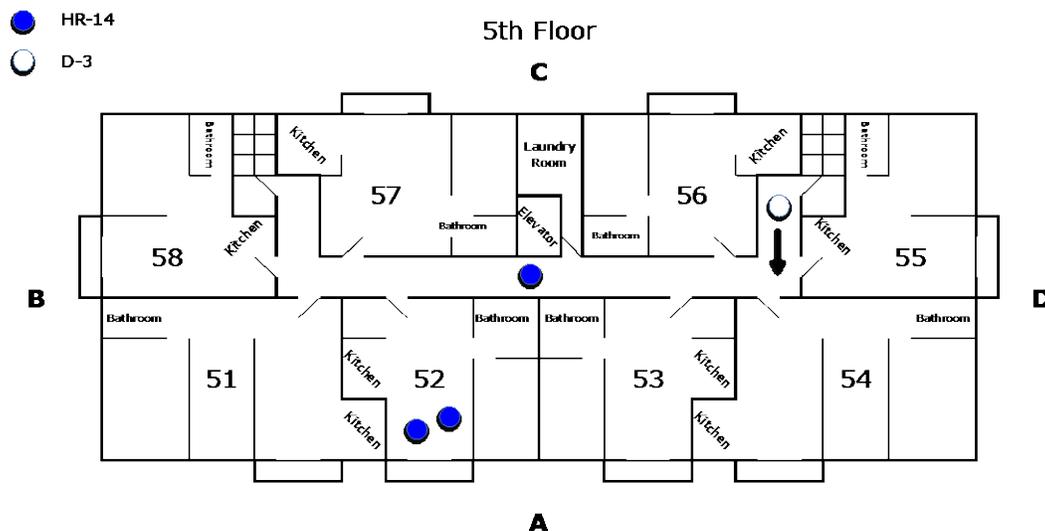
6:09:35: D-3 reports that he has HR-14 on their way to apartment 557. HR-14 is at the landing between the fourth and fifth floor. D-3 is below them on the stairs.



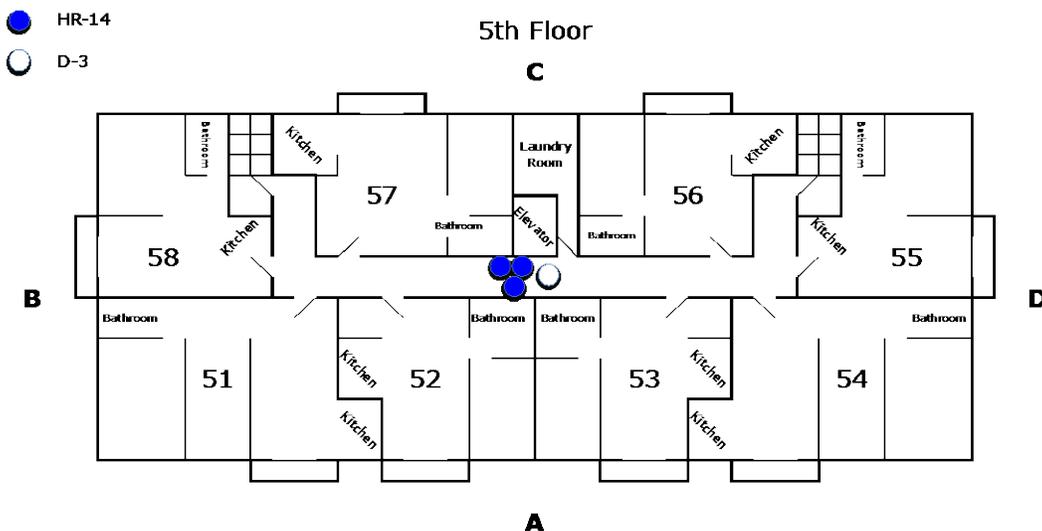
6:10:15: D-3 reports two victims coming out, "we've got one baby and one female adult." HR-14 OIC, FF#1, and FF#2 reported they were donning their SCBA face pieces when the victims passed them on the stairs escorted by L-18 FF#1, L-23 OIC, and L-23 FF#1. The order of HR-14 members on the stairs at this time was OIC, FF#2, FF#1, FAO Gordon.



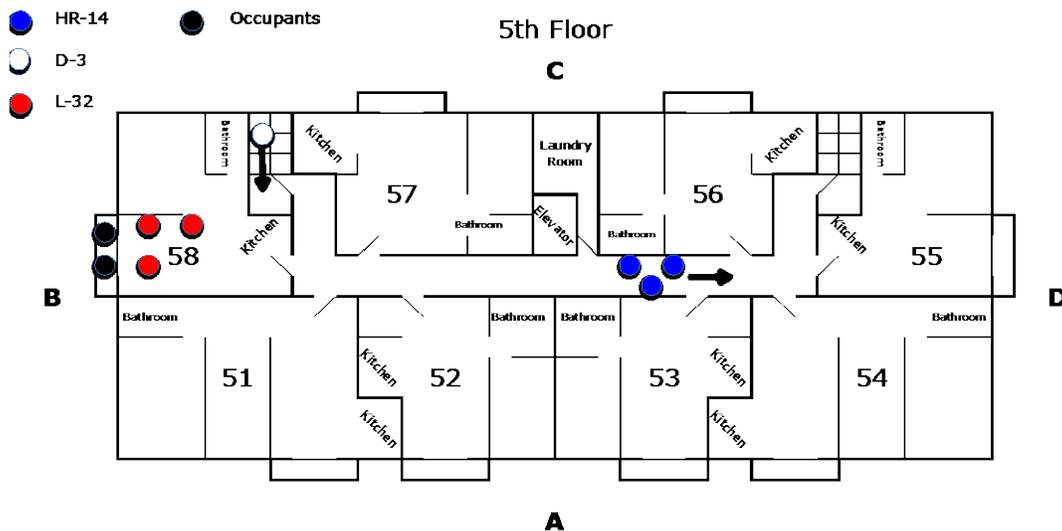
6:10: According to data retrieved from his ICM, FAO Gordon turned on his SCBA, donned his face piece, and went on air while in the stairwell between the 4th and 5th floor. The other members of HR-14 entered the fifth floor slightly ahead of FAO Gordon and began to search for victims. Smoke conditions were reported as moderate with visibility limited to 4-5 feet. HR-14 OIC and FF#2 entered apt 57; HR-14 FF#1 entered apt 51; **FAO Gordon's location is unknown.**



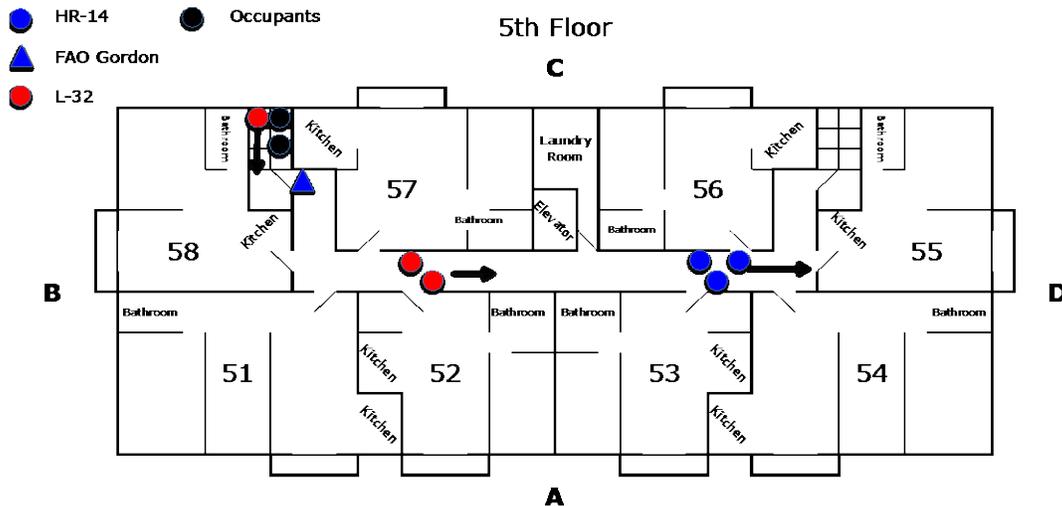
6:11: HR-14 OIC, FF#1, and FF#2 meet at the door to apt 52 where HR-14 OIC and FF#1 enter and search apt 52. HR-14 FF#2 proceeded down the hallway and found the elevator door. The elevator door opened easily without needing to be forced. HR-14 OIC and FF#1 arrived at FF#2's location where they discussed how to mark the free-swinging elevator door which led to an open elevator shaft. **FAO Gordon was not present when this discussion took place, his location is unknown.**



6:11-06:12: While on the fifth floor D-3 encountered HR-14 OIC, FF# 1, and FF#2 at the elevator door. HR-14 showed D-3 the open elevator shaft. HR-14 and D-3 looked into the shaft again at this time and saw nothing. HR-14 FF#2 marked the door with a black permanent marker, "Do Not Enter Open Shaft" [Figure 9]. D-3 moved toward the B-C stairwell while HR-14 OIC, FF# 1, and FF#2 searched the laundry room and continued toward the D side of the building. **FAO Gordon's location is unknown.**



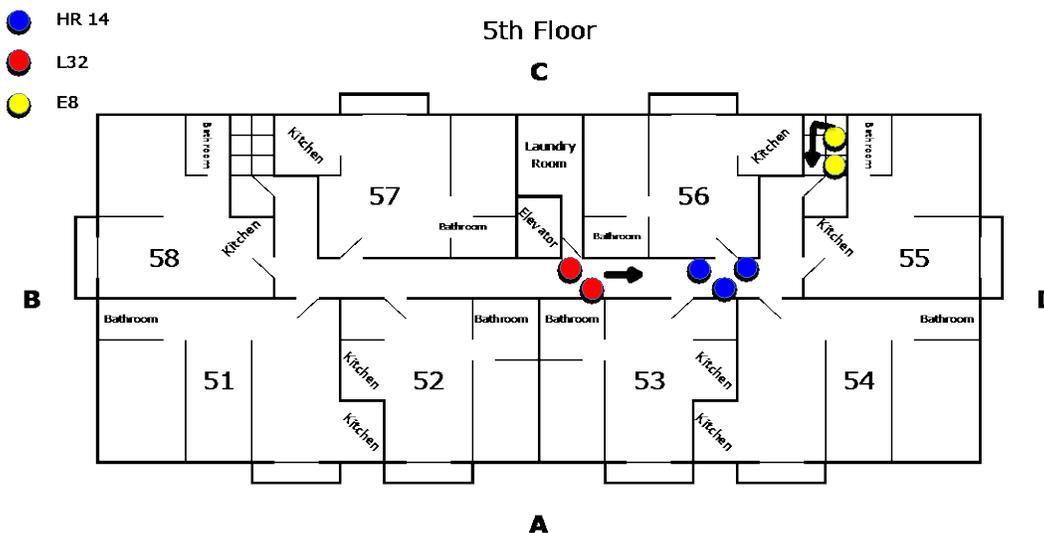
6:11-6:12: L-32 OIC, FAO and FF#1 arrive on the 5th floor and proceed into apt 58 to rescue two victims from the balcony. At this time D-3 left the fifth floor. **FAO Gordon's location is unknown.**



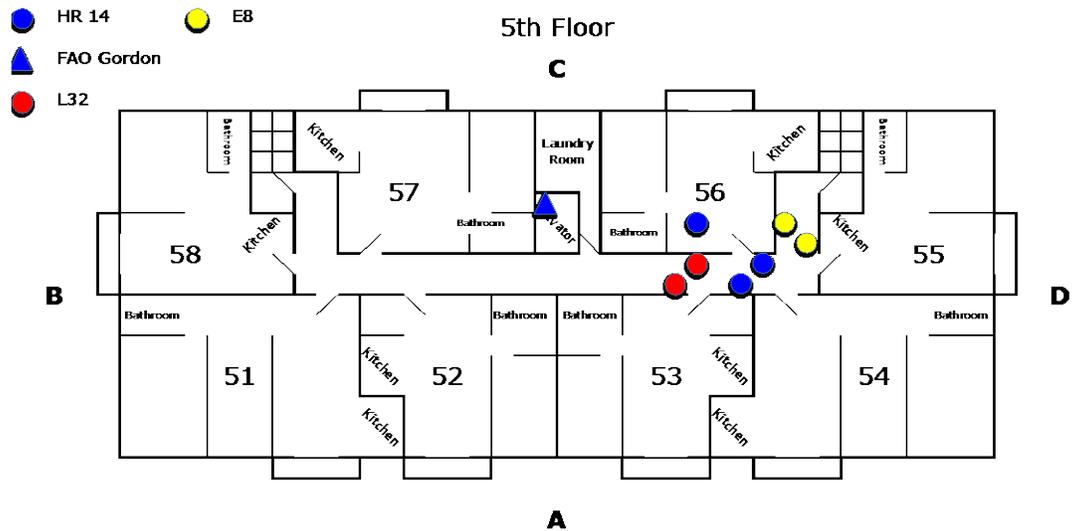
6:11-6:12: L-32 FF#1 escorted two occupants from apt 58 to the B-C stairwell while L-32 OIC and FAO continued down the hallway and continued to search. On the landing between the fourth and fifth floor, L-32 FF#1 saw FAO Gordon on the landing above him at the fifth floor door.

FAO Gordon asked L32 FF#1 "Are you HR-14"
 L-32 FF#1 responded "No, I'm with L-32. Who are you?"
 FAO Gordon replied "I'm Daryl Gordon."

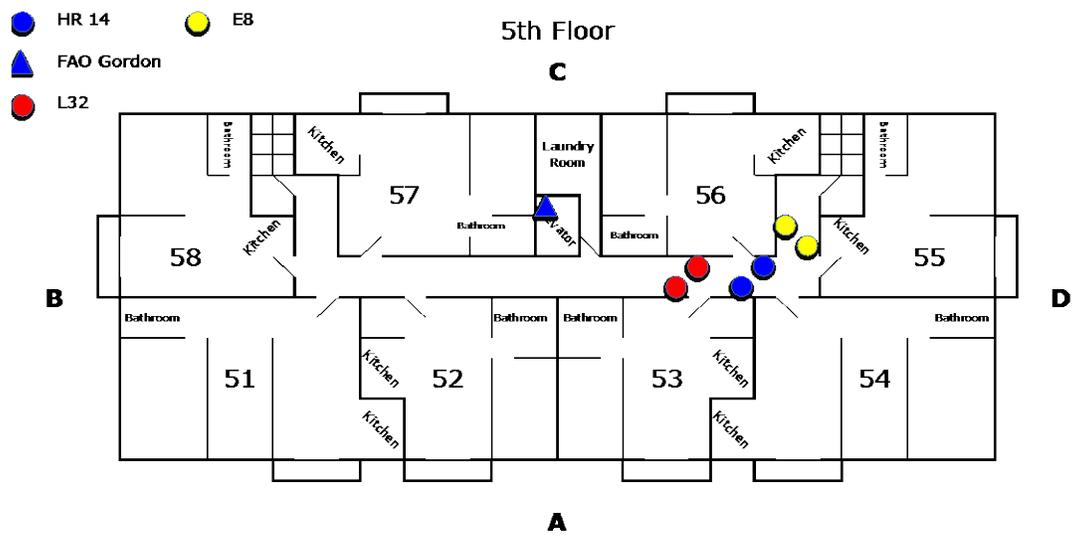
After this verbal exchange, FAO Gordon turned around and headed back to the fifth floor hallway as L-32 FF#1 continued down the stairs with the two occupants from apt 58. *Note: This is the last reported contact with FAO Gordon prior to him falling into the elevator shaft.*



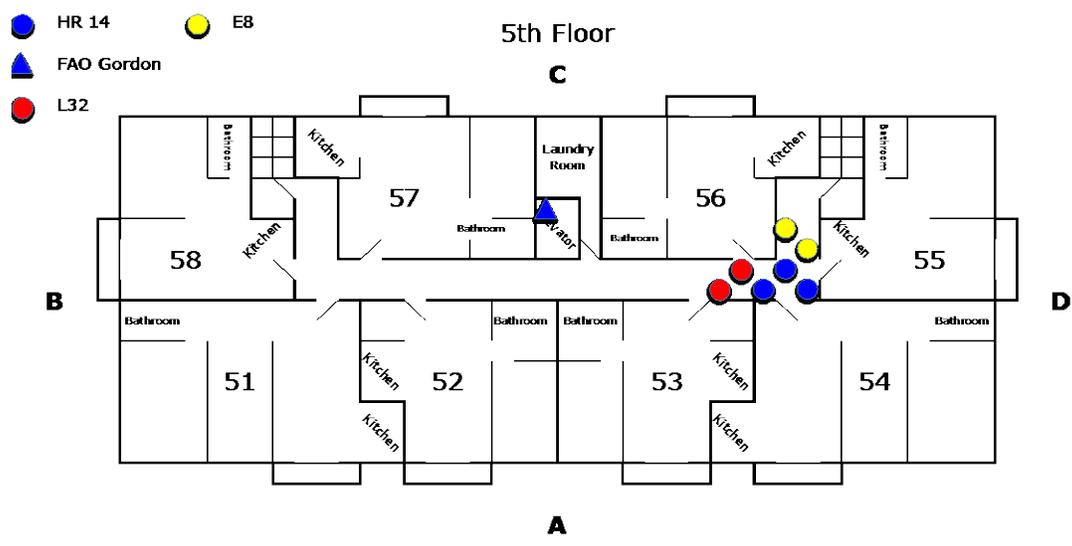
6:12:36: E-8 advises command, by radio, that they have completed their search of floor 4 and going to floor 5. **FAO Gordon's location is unknown.**



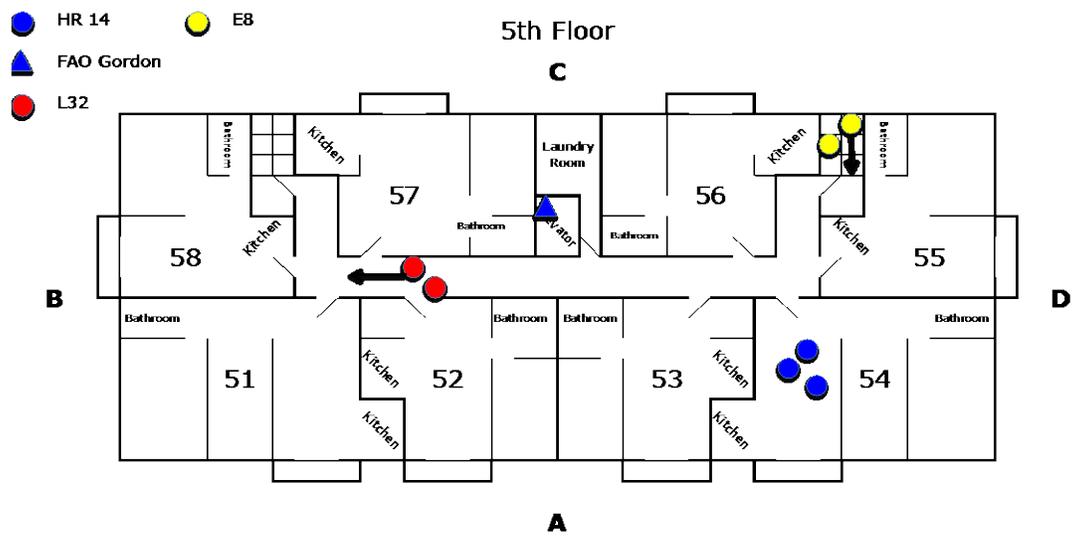
6:13: According to the ICM data, FAO Gordon's PASS device motion alarm is activated at this time.



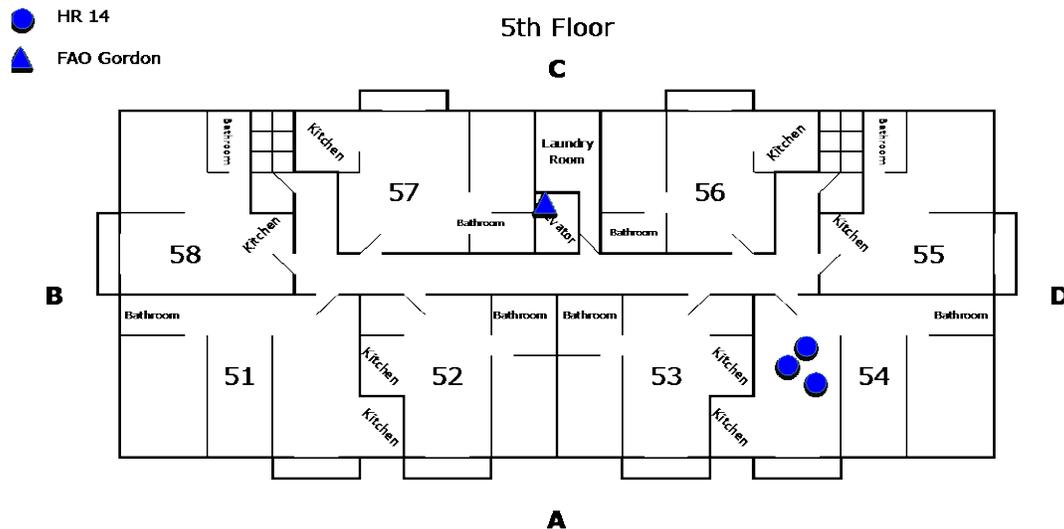
6:13:36: HR-14 OIC, FF#1 and FF#2 reach the D side of the hallway and meet with the members of E-8, they discuss forcing apartment doors. E-8 contacts command, by radio, about forcing doors.



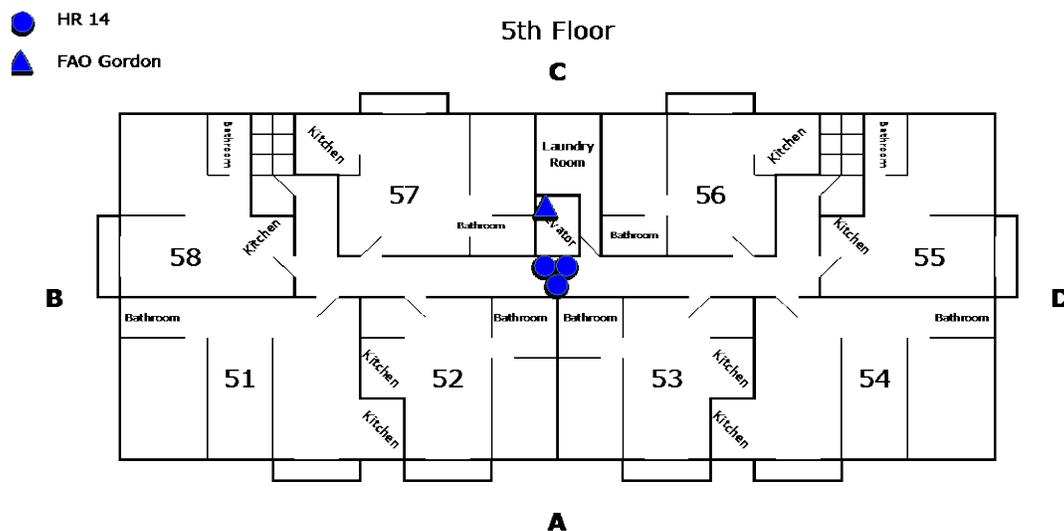
6:14:16: L-32 OIC and FAO join the discussion between HR-14 and E-8. E-8 OIC requests verification from Command reference forcing doors. L-32 OIC and FAO force entry into apt 54 and move back toward the B-C stairwell. HR-14 OIC, FF#1, and FF#2 search apt 54.



6:15:36: HR-14 radios an "all clear" to Dahlgren Command.



6:19:40: Dahlgren Command called for a PAR. At this time, HR-14 OIC conducts a PAR of HR-14 and realizes FAO Gordon is not present. HR-14 OIC, FF#1, and FF#2 begin to search the fifth floor, starting near apt 54 and moving through the hallway toward the B-C stairwell.



6:22: HR-14 OIC, FF#1, and FF#2 moved closer to the elevator door at which time HR-14 OIC heard an SCBA low pressure alarm bell ringing. The members of HR-14 looked into the elevator shaft and saw a fire helmet on top of the elevator car. After two unsuccessful attempts to transmit the MAYDAY, HR14 OIC activated the radio emergency button and broadcasts the MAYDAY transmission at **06:22:23**.

Figure 2: A side of 6020 Dahlgren St



Figure 3: B side of 6020 Dahlgren Street



Figure 4: C side of 6020 Dahlgren Street (Viewed from the B-C Corner)



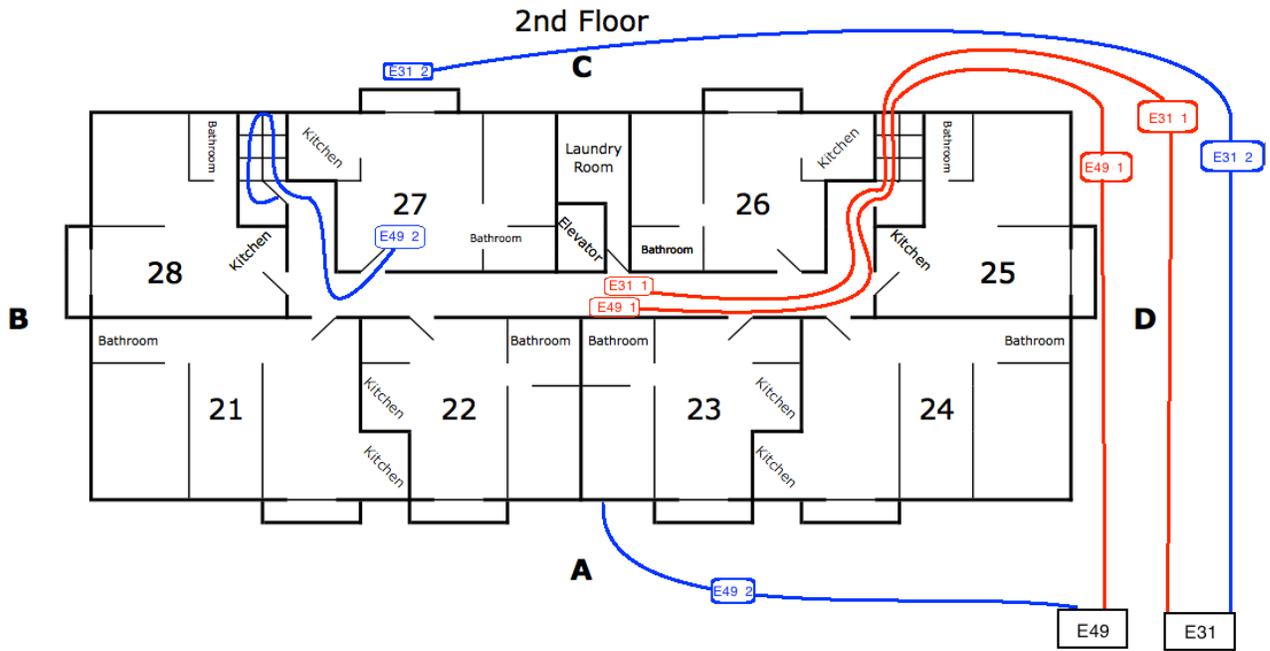
Figure 5: D side of 6020 Dahlgren Street



Figure 6: Space between stair and wall where attack line became wedged

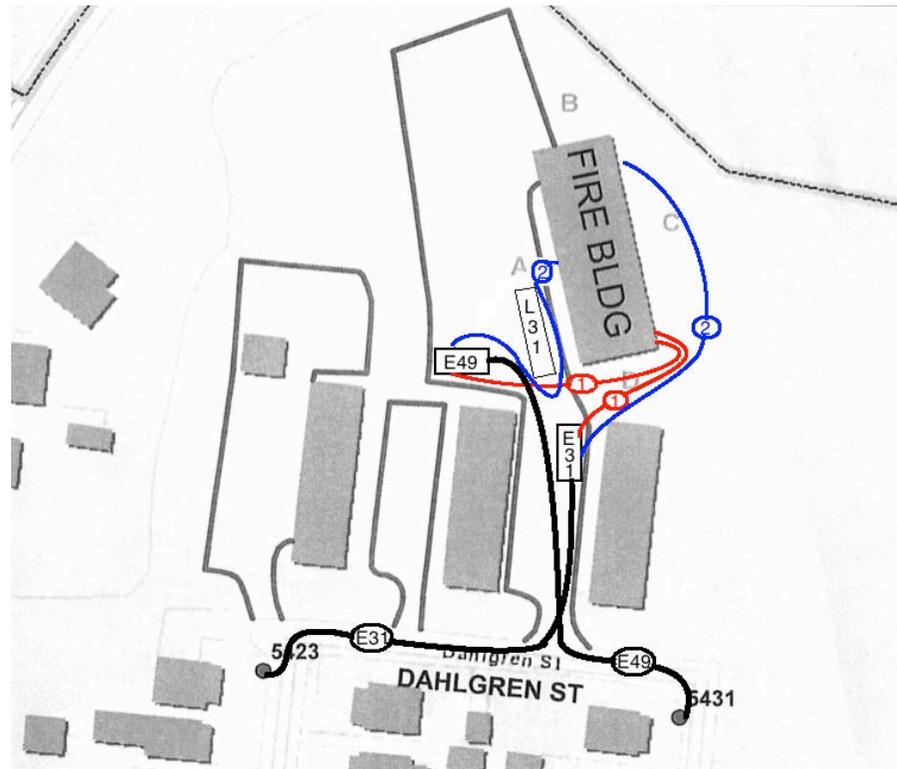


Figure 7: Hose deployment



NOTE: The second line off of Engine 49 [E49 2] was advanced through the first floor A side entrance and up the B-C stairwell to the second floor.

Figure 8: Apparatus position



Figures 9: Fifth floor elevator door



Figure 10: Fifth floor elevator door





Figure 11: View of elevator shaft and top of elevator car

Figure 12: Diagram of elevator shaft and top of elevator car

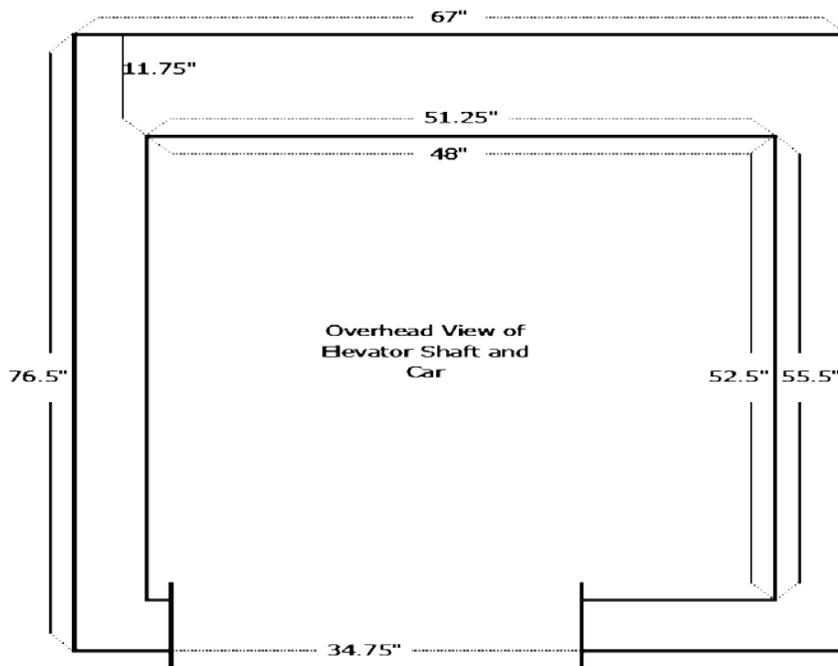


Figure 13: Second floor hallway (viewed from the D side looking toward the B side with the initial attack line)



Figure 14: Second floor hallway (the door to the fire apartment (apt 27) is on the right)



Figure 15: View of fire apartment from C side

